

Media, PA – Acutely aware that 152,000 of 7th Congressional District citizens work outside of the district, Congressman Sestak returned to the Aker Philadelphia Shipyard, which he visited last year, where he discussed trade legislation, local small businesses, manufacturing, and workforce development with the president of the shipyard as well as with a group of boilermakers who work there. — In April of this year, Aker, strictly in the business of ship construction, will deliver its fourth in a series of twelve product tankers. This will be the eighth ship delivered by Aker since 2003, which is more vessels than any other U.S. shipyard in the same period of time, and the yard has a backlog through 2011. Aker is entirely a commercial construction shipyard which is dependent on the U.S. domestic ship operators for its market. The total workforce in the shipyard is approximately 1,300. A recently released Carnegie Mellon analysis estimates that the shipyard generates over \$230 million annually in economic activity to the region.

Congressman Sestak said he was pleased to revisit the shipyard and noted that the ships built there were done so under The Jones Act, of which he is a supporter. The Jones Act requires all commercial vessels transporting merchandise between ports in the United States to be built, owned operate and manned by U.S. citizens and to be registered under the U.S. flag. He, with other members of Congress, signed a letter supporting a Concurrent Resolution to reaffirm his and Congress's backing of this important Act and the nation's domestic shipping statutes.

The Congressman noted that The Jones Act is an essential feature of U.S. national security policy, as it generates tax revenue, avoids dependence on ships controlled by foreign countries, and strengthens our economy and military.

The Congressman also addressed issues of small business retention and workforce development, noting: "While we have a wonderful base of workers, local manufacturers often have to look for employees outside of their own regions, as some artisans are not given the high-tech training they now need to enter their chosen professions, and many trades now require specialized technical and computer skills that they didn't in years past."

"At the same time," he added, "We must work to ensure that as we provide these employees with the proper technical skills, our district maintains its small businesses and manufacturing core, which has been shrinking in recent years. This educational and economic security necessarily strengthens the overall national security of our region."

To address the challenges of preparing our workforce for the globalizing, 21st century world, the Congressman noted that he secured \$1.25 million from the federal government to improve infrastructure and capacity of Cheyney's Science and Technology building in order to better prepare underrepresented minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Cheyney University's current facility was constructed in 1967 and has not been updated since. The funding will provide an environment that is conducive to the study of STEM disciplines, and increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the program.

The Congressman also secured funding for STEM in the amount of \$170,000 for The Delaware County Community College's Science, Engineering, and Technology Complex, which will use this award to consolidate and upgrade their science, engineering, and technology facilities into one cutting-edge complex. The complex will include a 100,000 square foot four-story building for modern science laboratories that permits a variety of instructional modalities that will foster cross-discipline activities and student-faculty interaction.

Addressing issues of small businesses and retention in the region, the Congressman, who serves as Vice Chairman of the House Small Business Committee, noted Delaware County's low 4 percent unemployment rate, but added that that statistic alone is insufficient. For example, Delaware County has lost 762 small businesses in the last six years, 22 percent of them in manufacturing, and manufacturing employment overall is down about 14 percent since 2001. Moreover, the median household income in Delaware County is more than \$300 less, when adjusted for inflation, than it was in 2001 per capita and per household. In short, people are earning today less in real terms than they were six years ago.

The Congressman has addressed this issue via the FY 2008 appropriations process when he procured \$187,000 for use by the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce Foundation the Community Partnership for Job Readiness Program. That program, administered by the Foundation of the Delaware County Chamber, will provide workforce development services in the municipalities of Trainer, Marcus Hook and Upper Darby. This project will coordinate technical training for residents, develop a community infrastructure to communicate those services, and prepare residents to meet the employment needs of area businesses and industries in the near future.

Further, the Congressman has successfully passed several pieces of legislation that support small businesses and their owners. He recently sponsored, and the president signed into law, an amendment was added to the Defense Authorization Bill and requires market research to be

conducted by the Department of Defense on the ability of small businesses to do the work prior to awarding contracts of more than \$5 million dollars. Another one of his amendments addresses the fact that in our district, small businesses have historically received only 6.7 percent of federal contracts that come into the district, despite a federal goal of 23 percent. This legislation stops the government from unfairly “bundling” small contracts into “mega-contracts,” a practice that makes it harder for small business to compete. Another piece of legislation provides grants and entrepreneurial tools for critical management and technical assistance to small business owners. Still another provides trade assistance to small business to increase their exports.

In addition, the Congressman was an original cosponsor of the Small Business Trade Programs Act of 2007, which strengthens and expands small business exporter access to foreign markets and protects and assists small businesses affected by the global market through enhancing the Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. With regard to that bipartisan legislation, the Congressman voted to expand and modernize that act, which provides workforce training programs, expands unemployment support for workers who are undertaking new training opportunities, and provides tax incentives to encourage the redevelopment of communities that have suffered substantial reductions in manufacturing employment.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.